

THE CLAN

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Gei //Khaun. The latter, whose founder was the eldest of the five brothers, are acknowledged by all the others to be the senior tribe among them. In spite of this claim to a common ancestry, however, the tribes have for a long time been independent of one another; although, according to Hahn, the chief of the *Gei //Khaun* received an annual tribute from the rest of the tribes up to as late as 1863.¹

Each tribe has its acknowledged chief, *gao-aob*, and also an acknowledged claim to certain large permanent fountains or pools in river beds. Before the coming of the Orlams and of the white man the boundaries between the different tribes were not defined in any clear manner. Different waterholes or fountains in the country were always thought of as belonging to certain specific tribes, who used to wander about from fountain to fountain, seeking pasture for their cattle. Other people could use the water, too, but one tribe had a prior claim to it, established by habit, and had the right to expect that any other group intending to camp there for a long time would ask permission to do so.

The tribes do not seem to have ever been at all large. The number of people in each ranged apparently from several hundreds to a couple of thousand. It is difficult to obtain any trustworthy figures, owing to the great disruption that has taken place in the social organization of the people, but Palgrave's estimate, made at a time when conditions were less disturbed, may be taken as a useful guide to the relative size of the tribes in 1876. The *Gei //Khaun* then numbered approximately 2,500, the *Aunin* 750, the *//O Gein* 800, *//Khaun* / *Goan* 1,000, *//Haboben* 1,800, *!Khara Gei Khoi* 800, *!Gami /Nun* 2,000, *Afrikaners* 800, *Witboois* 2,500, *Bethanie Hottentots* 2,000, *Berseba Hottentots* 700, and the *Amraal Hottentots* 600.² In 1923, however, of the still surviving Nama tribes the *Gei //Khaun* numbered only about 100 and the *//Khaun /Goan* 200, while, on the other hand, the *Berseba Hottentots*, who had avoided all conflict with the Germans, were able to claim over 3,000 adherents.

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Each tribe was composed of a number of patrilineal clans (*//hau* / *nati*, lit. things within the tribe), i.e. groups of people claiming to be related in the male line.³ One of these clans claimed seniority, and

¹ *Tami-//Goan*, 97.

² W. C. Palgrave, *Report of . . . Mission to Damaraland and Great Namaqualand in 1876*,

94, quoted by Houtsma, *op. cit.*, 7.

³ Houtsma, *op. cit.*, 9-16; Olyp, *op. cit.*, 23; Kohler, *op. cit.*, 338-9.

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[643] the chieftainship of the whole tribe was hereditary in this senior clan, and inherited in the male line from father to son. In the case of the //Khaui /Goan (Swartbooi) tribe the names of ten clans have been preserved, in the case of the Gei //Khauan (Rooi Natie) of fifteen, and in that of the /Hobesen (Witboois) of seven. It appears from the clan names of the Gei //Khauan that there must formerly have been several more clans in this tribe, so that on the whole the size of a clan cannot have been considerable. No actual figures are available, however.

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173 Each clan named itself eponymously from its first known ancestor, or from the ancestor under whom it first claimed independence. In some cases tribal traditions have been preserved in which the various clans in the tribe are shown to have been related to one another in the past. The legend of the Swartboois, for instance, is that they separated from the Rooi Natie under the leadership of the /Garin family, and that the three brothers of this family became the ancestors of the three chief clans of the tribe—the /Gari Gein or big /Garin, the /Gari /Nagaman or "next" /Garin, and the /Gari /Karin or little /Garin, these names being those of the three brothers respectively.¹ When the tribe was first formed the chieftainship was vested in the /Gari Gein clan, but it has now passed to the second clan, the /Gari /Nagaman, as the senior clan has become almost extinct, being represented to-day by only two or three people. Two of the other clans in this tribe are formed by people who were incorporated from the //O Gein tribe after the latter had broken up; and a similar instance where members of a different tribe were absorbed is found in the case of the /Aunin living at Walvis Bay, who completely defeated another Nama people known as the /Namaxin and incorporated its remnant into their own clans. It would appear, therefore, that the different clans now found in a tribe are by no means always related, and even where they do claim a common descent it is no longer possible to trace this relationship genealogically.

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551 The various family groups which go together to form a clan are also called /hau /nati. These family groups to-day have Dutch, or, at any rate, European surnames. Some of the clans have only one

[551] ¹ It is the Hottentot custom for all the sons of a woman to be called by her "great name" (*gai khai /au*), while all the daughters are similarly called by the *gai khai /au* of their father. Hence all the sons of a woman named /Garis will be called /Garis, and all the daughters of a man named //Khaui will be called //Khaui. They are distinguished from one another by the use of special adjectives, the eldest son being called the big one, *gais*, hence /Gari *gais*, the second the next one, /nagamat, hence /Gari /nagamat, the third the dark one, *tand*, or the light one, /kai, or the tall one, *gans*, and so on, while the youngest will be called the young one, *fani*, or the little one, /kari, hence /Gari /kari. The same distinctions are made in the case of the daughters.

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family surname. That of the /Gari /Nagaman, for example, is Swartbooi, and that of the /Neisi Ein, another of the Swartbooi clans, is Beukes. Other clans have several of these surnames, e.g. those of the /Gurusiin clan of the same tribe are Swartbooi, Gertze, Richter, and Van der Bijl, and little genealogical connection can now be traced between the different family groups bearing these names. Members of the same clan, however, all considered themselves blood relatives, and were bound together by various common rules and observances. Marriage within the clan was strongly forbidden, so that a man had to seek his wife in another clan. The children belonged to the clan of their father. Apart from thus restricting marriage and regulating descent, and with it inheritance and succession, the clan seems to have functioned mainly as a political unit. There is no record of any ceremonial observances and taboos specially connected with the clan organization, nor was there anything in the nature of totemism among the Hottentots. The members of a clan all tended to live together, and membership of a clan guaranteed a person a strong measure of protection. He could always count on the support of his fellow-clansmen, especially in the case of blood feud. Early last century the vendetta system was still in force among the Naman, even between clans of the same tribe, and the chief of the tribe was unable to prevent two clans from carrying out blood vengeance on each other, or to force them to accept compensation. [582 611]

The clan was thus the strongest unit ever attained by the Naman. Time and again a powerful clan would go off on its own, asserting its independence of the others, and clan loyalty was always stronger than tribal loyalty. The chief of the tribe was little more than *primus inter pares*. He was acknowledged to be the head of the senior clan, and if a man of fine character was accorded a great deal of respect; but the heads of the other clans acted as his council, and he could not do much without their co-operation. The whole conduct of affairs in the tribe was—and still is—the concern of the older men. [628]

The clan structure of the Swartboois as analysed by Mrs. Hoernlé shows the whole mechanism by which clans and tribes were formed among the Naman. A large and flourishing family would very often have its own favourite pasturing grounds, and be so large as to exclude members of other families or clans. In course of time they would become sufficient unto themselves, and the headman begin to play the part of a chief. They would arrange migrations to suit themselves independently of the other members of the tribe, and ultimately be

618 acknowledged as independent. As the families increased descendants
619 of different brothers would group themselves more closely and form
593 clans and even sub-clans. In this way a new tribe would gradually
693 develop from a clan or part of a clan of the parent tribe.

ENCAMPMENTS AND DWELLINGS

361 Small as the tribes were, their members were yet too numerous
618 to remain together for long at any one spot. As a rule they were
619 scattered over the country in smaller groups, each group consisting
of a clan of the tribe, or even of some part of a clan. The older members
of the clan, however, would always stay on at the headquarters of the
tribal chief; and in this encampment the relative position of the
different clans was strictly regulated by custom.

361 In the old days the main tribal encampment was in the form of a
417 great circle.¹ The whole was enclosed with a great fence of thorn, in
231 which were two gateways, one to the north, the other to the south.
618 Within this fence and round the circumference were the huts of the
people, each hut facing inwards to the centre. The huts of the chief
and the members of his clan stood in the western portion of the circle,
facing east, and on either side of them were ranged in fixed order the
huts of the other clans, the members of each clan living close together.
The great open space in the centre served as a fold for the stock at
night. Special enclosures were made for the calves and the lambs,
but there were no enclosures for the cattle and sheep, which just lay
in front of their owner's hut till driven out to pasture in the morning.

361 The old camping order of the clans has long since been given up,
592 but the order of camping of the families within the clan is still main-
tained in many instances. In any settlement of Hottentots may be
found the huts of a number of men called by the same name and
belonging to the same family group. These huts are ranged in order
of seniority. The oldest brother with his wife, children, and dependents
dwells furthest to the right, the youngest brother furthest to the left,
as one stands, facing outwards, at the doorway of any hut. Near
each of the brothers are grouped his immediate dependents, the
married sons to the right, the oldest furthest to the right, the youngest
nearest to the hut of the father, while on the left is any married daughter
not yet removed to her husband's people and any widowed sister
come home to live with him. Other dependents of various kinds are

¹ Hornell, *op. cit.*, 15-17, *passim*. For the Cape Hottentots, cf. Kolb, *Vergleiche der Gassen Hoffen*, 109 and *passim*; Fritsch, *Einwanderer Südafrikas*, 316 sq.; Sparrman, *Voyage to the Cape of Good Hope*, 4, 195-7.

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thief is a Bergdama or a Bushman, he is tracked and simply shot down, the chief as a rule taking no notice at all of such cases, and, where he does, never siding with the party of the thief.¹ 423

In the other Nama tribes there seem to have been no private rights of this nature. In certain respects, however, there was a limitation to unrestricted exploitation of the land and its resources by any member of the tribe. Hunting rights over the tribal land, for example, were common to all, but the game was regarded as the herds of the chief. Anybody shooting big game was therefore expected to give him the head and the four lower legs of the animal, while of small game he received portions of the meat. Refusal to yield this tribute was punished. Pasture lands, again, were also common to all, but the chief could order certain grazing grounds to be vacated in order that they might be rested. His consent was also necessary if the inhabitants of any kraal wished to burn the veld shortly before the rainy season, so that when the first rains fell new juicy grass might spring up. These regulations, of course, do not involve interference with established personal rights, but are to be regarded rather as the exercise of recognized control vested in the chieftainship.² 423 224 643

In other directions we find recognition given to the prior rights of an individual. If a man dug a well or opened a spring, it was regarded as under his special authority, and, after inspection by the chief, was named after him. Every passer-by had to have his permission before using the water, but it was equally his duty to see that no stranger or his stock was denied access to it. Any man, again, who found a swarm of wild bees in the cleft of a rock or in the hollow of a tree could acquire rights of ownership over their honey by breaking a few twigs and laying them in front of the hive. Whoever then ignored this sign and took away the honey was regarded as a thief and had to recompense the owner. But here also the chief or the head of the kraal exercised some measure of control. If the swarm was still young, it might not be molested, under penalty of punishment, and the owner was also punished if by extracting all the honey he caused the swarm to wander away elsewhere. Moreover, he was expected to give several good combs of the honey to the chief or the kraal head.³ The private rights casually acquired in this way should not, however, be confused in nature with those noted above to the /nara bushes, which are based on heredity and shared equally by all members of the tribe. 423 [685] [643]

¹ Schickel, op. cit., 197, 318.² Wandres, op. cit., 671-6; *Report on the Natives of S.W.A.*, 76. ³ Wandres, loc. cit.

CHAPTER XII

REGULATION OF PUBLIC LIFE

POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

642 LIKE most other aspects of their culture, the political organization
177 of the Hottentots in recent times shows to a considerable extent the signs of Dutch influence. For information as to their original form of government we must therefore refer mainly to the accounts of the earlier writers. Here, again, our principal authority is Kolb, who describes the political institutions of the Cape Hottentots more fully and explicitly than does any other observer.

643 He states¹ that at the head of every tribe there was a chief, *kouqui*
619 or *khoegue*, whose office was hereditary in the male line. The normal
622 heir to the chieftainship was the eldest son of the ruling chief. Failing a son, the office passed to the nearest male relative, such as a brother or a brother's son, but never to a daughter. The new chief at his accession had to pledge himself before an assembly of the "captains" of the tribe to preserve all the old laws and traditions of the people, and not to interfere with any established rights and prerogatives.

[57N] He had also to slaughter a couple of sheep or an ox as a feast for the "captains". Only these men and himself ate of the meat, while the broth was given to their wives. On the following day or on some suitable occasion a similar feast was provided by his wife for the wives of the captains. This time the meat was eaten by the women, and the broth given to their husbands. There is no other record of any installation ceremony connected with the chieftainship, so that the accuracy of Kolb's statements in this respect cannot be vouched for.

643 The functions of the chief were apparently purely political. He
619 led the army in war, he conducted the negotiations of peace, and he
622 presided over the tribal council. The latter was the real governing body of the tribe. It consisted of the "captains" or headmen of
645 all the different local groups constituting the tribe, and was summoned by the chief to his residence whenever any matter of public importance arose. It dealt with all such questions as peace and war, disputes

¹ *Reise zum Vorgebirge der Guten Hoffnung*, 42-4; cf. Fritsch, *Eingeborenen Süd-Afrika's*, 321-2.

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between different kraals, and relations with neighbouring tribes or with the European settlers. In this council the authority of the chief was dependent mainly upon his personality. His normal duties were to direct and sum up the deliberations of its members, who sat around him in a circle. If he was a man of strong character, he could succeed in imposing his will upon the others; otherwise his opinion might be disregarded, and he had to abide by the decision of the majority.

When not occupied with tribal affairs of this nature, the chief was concerned merely with the government of his own local group, i.e. of the kraal where he resided. In this respect he played the part of an ordinary kraal headman. Every large Hottentot kraal had its own recognized headman or "captain" (usually spoken of in the early Cape Records by the Dutch title "kapitein"), whose status was hereditary in the same way as that of the chief. The ceremonies of accession, as described by Kolb, were also similar to those of the chief, except that the headman had to make his pledge before the adult men of the kraal, and to provide the feast for them. All these men constituted a loosely-organized council over which he presided. They acted in the first instance as a court of justice. They met to settle disputes of right and property between the inhabitants of the kraal, and tried and punished criminal offences committed within their jurisdiction. The verdict arrived at was pronounced by the headman, and where the death penalty was imposed his was the first hand to smite down the culprit. There was no appeal from their decision or sentence to the main tribal council. They also dealt with all matters affecting the common interests of the kraal, such as removal to new pasture grounds, public feasts and sacrificial offerings. The rôle of the headman in this council was roughly similar to that of the chief in the tribal council, and the degree of his authority was determined by the strength of his character. In time of war he also had the command, under the chief of the tribe, of the troops supplied from his kraal.

Neither the chief nor the headmen had special insignia or other marks of office, except that their karosses were made of leopard or wild cat skins; but the Dutch, when they entered into alliances with the Hottentot tribes, presented to the former a crown of copper, and to each of the latter a copper-headed cane, which henceforth were regarded as distinguishing badges of authority. The chief was not entitled to the personal services of his subjects, nor, says Kolb, did he receive anything in the nature of tribute or public

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● 643 revenue. It appears, however, from the report of an expedition made
554 to the Inqua in 1689 under the leadership of Ensign Schrijver, that
[224] in this tribe at least there was a regulation that anyone killing game
in the chase might not eat of it until he had made a present to the chief.
In ignorance of this custom one of Schrijver's party shot a bird and
cooked it, whereupon the chief expressed displeasure and refused
to carry on any more barter with the Dutch travellers. As soon
as Schrijver was made aware of the circumstance and of the tribal
usage, he sent the chief a present of beads, which was received as ample
atonement for the mistake.¹ There is no other record of any similar
prerogative of the chief's, so that one cannot say whether the usage
just described existed in the other Cape Hottentot tribes as well.
Kolb, as we have noted, says that no tribute at all was paid to the chief:
he lived, like any ordinary tribesman, upon the milk of his cattle,
and there is nothing to indicate that he was necessarily more wealthy
than anybody else. He might be accorded a good deal of respect,
but there is no mention of any special etiquette or ceremonial observed
towards him.

642 Kolb's description, inadequate though it is from many points of
view, shows clearly that among the Cape Hottentots the local groups
618 were to a large extent autonomous, although the important affairs of
619 the tribe as a whole were regulated by their headmen in council.
622 Some light is thrown upon this by Mrs. Hoernlé's analysis of the
social organization of the Naman. It will be remembered from this
that every Hottentot tribe as a rule was scattered over the country
in smaller groups, each group consisting of a clan or of some part
of a clan. The chief of the tribe was the head of the senior clan, and
if a man of fine character could command a good deal of respect;
but the heads of the other clans acted as his council, and he could
not do much without their co-operation. The bonds holding together
the clans to form a tribe were never very strong, and often enough
a powerful clan would assert its independence of the others, and in
time become recognized as a separate tribe, with its own headman
as chief. In all probability the "captains" referred to by Kolb were
such headmen of clans of the tribe, and, as we shall see later, in actual
fact the different local divisions of the Cape Hottentot tribes were
only loosely connected together, and would often act independently
of one another, at times even against one another. The Dutch
practice of treating these headmen or "captains" as more or less

¹ Quoted in Godde-Mohrbergen, *Reise in de Kaap*, iii, 111.

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autonomous petty rulers naturally tended to accentuate the feeling of independence. At the same time it also gave the "captain" a more prominent position as an individual than he really seems to have occupied in the original conditions of native life.

As Kolb's description also brings out, the whole conduct of public affairs was the concern of the adult men generally, and, as appears from the descriptions of other writers, of the older men in particular. The chief, by virtue of his hereditary status, was the recognized head of the community, but his authority was circumscribed and precarious, and he could not act without consulting his council. It seems indeed, that in most cases he must be looked upon as the political representative rather than as the actual ruler of the tribe. There is nothing in the literature to indicate that he had any other special functions. Neither Kolb nor any other writer records any important religious or magical ceremonies which the chief had to perform on behalf of the tribe, any definite prohibitions or obligations regulating the relations between him and his subjects, or any ritual performances or taboos to which he was specially subjected. The sacred character often associated with the chieftainship in primitive society does not appear to have existed among the Hottentots.

The political organization of the Naman was in all probability originally the same as that of their southern relatives. But by the beginning of the nineteenth century, from which time onwards most of the relevant literature dates, the old form of government among the Orlams was being slowly altered into a crude modification of the system developed by the Dutch at the Cape. The influence of these incoming groups, and to some extent also of the missionaries, gradually affected the form of political institutions in the other Nama tribes as well. The system of tribal control found among them within recent years, although based upon the old native system, can therefore by no means be regarded as representing that system in its original form. It is nevertheless of considerable interest as illustrating the grafting of European elements upon Hottentot organization, and since it is in any case an integral part of the tribal life it cannot be ignored. The information bearing upon it is also more detailed and accurate than that relating to the Cape Hottentots, which it serves to supplement in several respects.¹

¹ The principal sources are: Schlegel, *Danach-Südwest-Afrika*, 120-3; von François, *Nama und Damara*, 218-21; Kohler, "Das Recht der Hottentotten," 317-9; *Report on the Natives of S.W.A.*, 70-4, 76 and *passim*; cf. also Tiedall, *Great Namaqualand*, 33-4; Olpp, *Angus Papuan*, 24; Wenden, "Die Khoi-Khoi," 323-4; Schultze, *Namaland und Kalahari*, 321; Volz, "The Nama," 142.

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[554] Every Nama tribe has its own hereditary chief, *gao-aob*, more commonly known nowadays by his Dutch title "kapitein". His official insignia, also a sign of Dutch influence, is the *gao-heib*, a long wooden staff with an iron or brass knob at one end. The successor to the office, under normal circumstances, is the eldest son of the last chief, and as such he is usually accepted without question by the tribe.¹

[562] If he is a minor his father's brother or some other near relative in the male line acts as regent, although one instance is recorded, in the case of the Gei //Kauan, of a woman reigning on behalf of her young brother until he came of age.² Women, however, never succeed of their own right to the chieftainship. Failing a son, the late chief's eldest surviving brother or brother's son takes his place. A chief has the right during his lifetime, owing to advancing old age, ill-health, or any good reason, to abdicate in favour of his heir. This, however, is an entirely personal right which he cannot be compelled to exercise against his will. There is no mention of special ceremonies observed at the accession of a new chief.

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645 The chief, although hereditary, and as such commanding great respect and influence, is bound to act in terms of the advice and resolutions of his councillors. Every tribe has a definite tribal council, "Raad," consisting of the chief ex-officio and of members elected at a mass meeting of the married men of the tribe. There is no information available as to the methods of election.³ The number of these elected councillors, "Raden," varies from tribe to tribe. The Bethanie Hottentots had twelve of them, the Swartboois nine, and the Witboois from fifteen to twenty. From their midst are appointed the senior officials of the tribe, such as the sub-chief ("onderkapitein"), magistrate ("magistraat"), war commandant, chief field cornet ("hoof veldkornet"), and later, as Christians, the elders of the church ("ouderlings"). In addition to this⁴ formally-constituted council, the older members of the tribe, qualified by age and

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887 experience, have the right to be consulted on all important public

¹ Tindall (op. cit., 42) and, following him, Fritsch (op. cit., 365) say that the heir to the chieftainship is usually the youngest son. This is inaccurate. The notorious Jonker Afrikaner, who, on account of his personal qualities, was designated by his father Jager to succeed to the chieftainship of the Afrikaners (//Aix //ain), was not the oldest son, and therefore in Hottentot eyes he was not entitled to become chief. The smaller part of the tribe supported him but the majority did not, and in consequence the tribe was split up, the various families settling down in different places, while Jonker with his adherents later moved into South-West Africa. (Cf. Frey, "Jonker Afrikaner and his Time," *J. S.W. Afr. Sci. Soc.*, 1, 19.)

² Vedder, op. cit., 115. Cf. Hahn (*Tausi-//Gum*, 19): "If a chief died, it often happened that his energetic wife became the *gao-tas* (contracted from *gao-tas*), the ruling woman—i.e. the queen of the tribe—in place of the son who was not yet of age."

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affairs, and they can act as assessors at the deliberations of the councillors. The chief cannot disregard their opinion, otherwise internal dissensions and even tribal disruption may ensue.¹ They serve to give more emphasis to the popular voice in determining public policy. 643 ● 887

The council is the tribal executive. It makes wars and treaties, rules and regulations for the public conduct, and deals with the internal and economic affairs of the tribe, as well as with inter-tribal relations. In its proceedings the vote of the chief is generally of no greater weight or value than that of any one of the elected councillors, although his expressed opinion bears great influence and probably ensures a majority for him in most cases, while if he is a man of strong character he may even succeed in dominating the others. The council is also the main court of justice. Civil litigants and criminals, who are usually dealt with by the magistrate or the sub-chiefs acting as the chief's deputies, can resort to it as a final court of appeal. Cases of serious import or serious charges involving possibly a sentence of capital punishment are generally dealt with by it as a court of first instance. In such cases an appeal lies to the chief in person, who has the right to exercise his prerogative of mercy. No capital punishment can legally be executed before he has expressly given his sanction. 645 692 [643 681]

In large tribes each outlying village or kraal is governed by a sub-chief ("onderkapitein"), appointed as deputy of the tribal chief by the chief-in-council. Often enough this sub-chief is one of the chief's closer relatives in the male line. He has his own local councillors, court, and officials, and can deal with all matters arising within his jurisdiction. There is always an appeal from his court to the main tribal council although as a rule the chief never deals with such an appeal without first referring the matter back to him for report. 621 622 692

Apart from the fact that the chief is generally the wealthiest man in the tribe, he is not distinguished in any special way from his subjects. At most his hut is somewhat bigger, and at communal meals he receives the best portion of meat, viz. the hind quarters.² Shaw, writing in 1821,³ says also that the chief claims a part of every animal taken in hunting; moreover, on the death of his wife, every adult man has to give him a cow, which, however, is returned after a certain 643 554 651

¹ Cf. the illustrations given of this by von François, op. cit., 97, 212.

² Hahn, "Die Nama-Hottentotten," 305.

³ *Report of the Wesleyan-Missionary Society, 1821*, pp. lxxvi-lxxvii; cf. *idem*, *Memorials of S. Africa*, 42.

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- 643 number of years. He also keeps a large quantity of milk at the door
 554 of his hut, which he distributes to the poor and the needy. None
 651 of these statements has been confirmed by later writers, with the
 exception of the tribute of game, which, as we have seen, is also
 mentioned by Wandres. Kohler's informant, on the other hand,
 explicitly denies that such a tribute is paid, and this would seem to
 be confirmed, at least as far as more recent times are concerned, by
 the statements of several other writers that the chief receives no tribute
 from his subjects. Nor does he levy any taxes, although in case of
 war or other extensive undertakings collections may be held or
 requisitions made, to which every tribesman has to contribute according
 to his means. The fines levied in criminal cases, however, often go
 to the chief, or are shared between him and the judges. He can also
 accept a share of the damages awarded in a civil dispute, but there
 is no obligation on the successful litigant to pay this. It is regarded
 merely as a voluntary gift for the trouble taken, and the same is
 probably true in those cases, mentioned by Wandres, where the
 chief regulates inheritances. In co-operation with his council the
 chief can also impose orders upon his people, which as a rule are
 implicitly obeyed. He can, e.g., cause certain grazing grounds to
 be vacated, in order that they may be rested. He has also the right
 to use the labour of the people for public purposes, such as mending
 roads, building schools, or churches, opening up water and furrows,
 and so on. All adult males further are liable to be called out for
 military duty at any time.

- 643 It may be added that, according to Hahn, a Hottentot chief is
 554 expected "to have an open house and an open hand" and the worst
 that can be said of a chief is that he is *gei-//are*, i.e. "greatly left-
 handed or stingy." "It happens sometimes," Hahn even says,
 "that another man is made chief, who is expected to be more liberal."¹
 There is no instance on record, as far as can be ascertained, of such
 a deposal having taken place, and the statement seems contradictory
 to the genuine respect attached by the people to the hereditary rights
 of the chief. "Our chiefs are not made," they say, "they are given
 by God." And Eduard Lambert, when on the death of his brother
 Andries the German authorities wished him to act as chief of the
 Gei //Khaun, the rightful heir being several hundred miles away,
 is said to have at first declined the proposal, with the words: "One

¹ *Tsuni-//Gnam*, 17; cf. Wandres, "Die Khoi-Khoi," 322.

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has to be a Chief even before you are born."¹ The implication, in Hahn's statement, that the chief has the special economic function of providing for his poorer subjects, is not borne out by any other writer, apart from Shaw's remark about the milk, but it is a point that does not appear to have been specially investigated. 643 554

As will have been noticed, the salient feature in the old political system of the Hottentots has been preserved in the modified system evolved by the Naman under European influence, viz. the fact that the conduct of public affairs, including the administration of justice, lay in the hands of the older men generally and that the chief had no distinctive authority. The principal modifications are the substitution of a limited elected council for the informal council of clan head-men, and the appointment of various public officials with special functions corresponding to their Dutch titles. This differentiation in governmental functions does not appear to have existed at all in purely native conditions. 642 178 881 643 645

It must also be mentioned that to some of the Orlam chiefs, whose military prowess had made them feared and respected throughout the country, the temptation to become autocrats was very strong, and few could resist it. They generally contrived, therefore, either to act quite independently of the council, which they treated as a mere advisory body, or, as in the case of Hendrik Witbooi, chief of the /Hobesen, they dispensed altogether with elections and nominated their own councils and officials, thus ensuring that their own trusty friends and supporters were placed in power. Hendrik Witbooi was a warrior chief of outstanding ability and enterprise, to whom democratic government was very irksome and distasteful. At the height of his power he styled himself the "Lord of the Water and the Head Chief of Great Namaqualand"; letters addressed to him as the "King of Great Namaqualand" received immediate and gracious attention; and to his death he was a firm believer in the "divine right of kings", claiming that he owed responsibility to no one except "God the Father in Heaven".² 643

The following "Proclamation", published by him in the early days of 1891, is of some interest, because it gives an idea of the system of government existing among all the Nama tribes at the time of the German annexation of South-West Africa. The only difference 643 624

¹ *Report on the Natives of S.W.A.*, 72, 81.

² Some illuminating examples of his correspondence are published by von François, op. cit., 126 sq., 219-22; *Report on the Natives of S.W.A.*, 83 sqq., 96; Kruft, "The Diary of Hendrik Witbooi," 55-61 *passim*.

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- 643 was that, while he was an autocrat to a certain extent, the other chiefs,
624 like Willem Christian of the Bondeiswarts, and Simon Kooper of the Franzmann Hottentots, relied more on popular approval and the support of their councillors than on their royal prerogatives.

HOORNERANZ,
3rd January, 1891.

BELOVED COMMUNITY OF HOORNERANZ,

To-day I make fresh appointments for the New Year. I have caused certain alterations to be made to the Civil and Church Laws. I have also appointed new officials according to the times and the promptings of the Lord. Therefore have I appointed younger men, like children who are being trained and, when the time is accomplished, they will be taken into full membership. For this reason I have relieved some of the older officials and have substituted young men in full authority of the laws, in order that they may publicly perform their authorized duties. I have, however, reappointed some of the old officials as well, so that they may train and teach the younger men. I have also appointed two additional elders. The names of those appointed will be read to the community, and are as follows:—

Then follows a list of the names and of the offices to which they have been appointed. These posts were all honorary, and carried no salaries or emoluments. The seven chief appointments are those of sub-chief, magistrate, war commandant, chief field cornet, and three senior councillors. The remainder (there are thirty in all) include the "overseer of the whole village", a "second magistrate", second, third, and fourth field cornets, elders, junior councillors, messengers of the court and of the elders, a "corporal" and a "second corporal". The "corporal", in spite of his humble designation, was really the quartermaster-general in the field!

LAW AND JUSTICE

- 671 The political institutions of the Hottentots must be regarded from one aspect as a means of welding the tribe into an integral unity, and thus giving it the cohesion and solidarity which enable it to present a united front to the outside world in defence and aggression. They serve also to maintain law and order within the tribe. Through its agencies of government the activities of the community are organized, and the harmonious co-operation in public affairs which this produces secures the orderly functioning of communal life. Various other mechanisms contribute towards the achievement of the same end. Throughout our discussion of the social and economic life of the people we have noted the existence of numerous observances, conventions, and rules. These regulate all the normal relations between persons, as in marriage with its conditions and implications, the status of husband and wife and of their respective families, kinship,

Quoted in *Report on the Nomads of S.W.A.*, 73. A similar list of officials for 1888, differing slightly from the above, is appended to a letter quoted by von François, op. cit., 220.

Nama
Cape Hottentots

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619 Hottentots (*//Hei //Khaun*) are also derived from this tribe, as their
648 names indicate.¹

It appears from the early records that the greater number of the Cape Hottentot tribes were more or less connected with the *//Khaun*, and acknowledged this tribe as paramount over them. Its principal branch in the middle of the seventeenth century was the Chainoqua, whose chief Soesoa or Sousa visited the Dutch settlement in 1660. Of his reception there by the other Hottentots Stow says, paraphrasing the official records²: "Sousa was held in such awe by those of other clans that neither Oedasoia nor any of his subjects dared come to trade as long as he remained near the fort. They made way for him, and waited upon him with presents of many cattle, to show the respect they owed to the highest king. That his authority was not merely nominal was shown by the fact of his interference in a quarrel between Choro, the chief of the 'Kora-chouqua, and Gonnema, the captain of a branch of the Cochoqua. They had parted in anger, the former having cunningly taken away the wife of the latter. War was imminent between them, until Sousa, the paramount chief, interfered, and threatened to degrade the one who was in the wrong. Such an acknowledgment of his supremacy by the chiefs of the other tribes would make it seem highly probable that the one over which he ruled represented the main trunk of the Hottentot race, from which all the others have been offshoots."

619 The early Dutch records throw some light on the political inter-
648 relations of the Cape Hottentot tribes. The headmen or "captains"
643 of divisions not long formed recognized the supremacy in rank of the
622 head of the community from which they had branched off, and acknowledged him as their paramount chief, but unless he happened to be a man of stronger character than the others he exercised no real power over them. The petty chiefs, or heads of the local groups or clans, were commonly jealous of one another, and only united their strength in case of extreme danger to all, while on occasion they might even fight amongst themselves. There appear to have been constant jealousies and quarrels between them and between the tribes, with occasional raids upon each other's cattle and eloping with one another's
619 wives. "This latter amusement," says Stow, perhaps exaggerating
648 somewhat, but having a real foundation for his remark, "seems to have been a common occurrence among them, and thus became an endless

¹ Hahn, *Tsuni-//Gom*, 96-7, 19.² Op. cit., 243-4; cf. Godde-Mohsbergen, op. cit., 4, 40-1.

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726 which he hunts all the more confidently if he knows their habits from previous encounters. While our soldiers are ever learning anew at the cost of many lives, the Hottentot employs his old tactics. He lies in wait for the enemy at a waterhole, as formerly he awaited the zebra at the vlei; he fires upon a passing column from his rocky retreats, as he ambushed the springboks wandering in herds; he stalks round a weak patrol as round the gemsbok at dawn, and he surrounds a transport as he beats up the hares in an encircling drive to knock them down with the kirri." They preferred above all to lay ambushes, especially in the vicinity of waterholes, since the enemy both needed the water and usually came to it weary. As a rule difficult spots were chosen to fight in, which afforded good cover and facilities for retreat, if necessary; or else the flat tops of high hills were occupied, whose last ascent was almost vertical. The leading ranks of the enemy were allowed to pass by or to approach very closely; and then a general volley was fired into their midst. Their natural colour allowed the Hottentots to make use of every possible cover, and rendered it difficult for the approaching enemy to discover the position they occupied. Signals were often given on pipes cut from the horn of the springbok. It was one of the duties of the sub-chief to ascertain if any post or waterhole which was being approached was occupied by the enemy. He rode round it reconnoitring, while his men lay hidden near by, until a long drawn-out note caused them to emerge. Short successive blasts, to be answered by the men lying opposite or to the side, were generally the prearranged signal for attack.

726
643 Their raiding expeditions, as illustrated in the many successful descents made by Hendrik Witbooi upon the OvaHerero, were carried out with great skill and remarkable swiftness. He issued directions for the undertaking proposed only on the evening before he planned to set out. Then by forced marches he covered in two days the hundred miles or so lying between him and the Herero territory, after causing deliberately false reports as to the object of his expedition to be circulated among the OvaHerero. With overwhelming force he fell at dawn on their scattered villages, swept through a number of cattle posts, whose herdsmen were defenceless before his superior might, and drove away the cattle. This he did with remarkable adroitness, considering the great numbers he lifted. One of his men would give a penetrating whistle, whereupon the cattle were surrounded and driven sharply in a certain direction. Then one or two horsemen placed themselves at the head of the herds and conducted them without

INTER-TRIBAL RELATIONS

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rest along a route well known to them; and then, joined by several more horsemen and the bulk of the men on foot, the cattle were escorted in forced marches by the most direct route to Hoonkranz, the headquarters of the tribe. Most of the horsemen remained behind to keep back the OvaHerero who in the meanwhile had gathered together. In regulating these retirements Hendrik was a real master, and he seldom made a mistake. If there was a biggish village in the vicinity, he would keep its inhabitants engaged until he knew that the stolen cattle had been driven far ahead; then he disappeared as swiftly as he had descended, and he always flung obstacles in the way of pursuit.

In retreat small parties were often posted at various spots to check the advance of the enemy; or, if the country was flat, the grass was set on fire, and the men disappeared behind the clouds of smoke. There was no orderly withdrawal. After a defeat the troops would scatter apart, to come together again later in small bands. The appointed place of assembly was not directly in line with the scene of battle, but to the side, sometimes even to the rear of the enemy. Their knowledge of the place and their colour, as well as their swiftness on horse or on foot, enabled the Hottentots to find security; sometimes they even hid in the immediate vicinity, and they always, if possible, fled over stony ground, so as to avoid leaving tracks. At best the enemy might see in the distance horsemen and those on foot scattered over a wide surface between bushes and rocks; almost immediately afterwards all had disappeared, and effective pursuit was seldom possible.

Of the special usages connected with warfare, only a few isolated facts have been recorded. These almost all relate to what may be loosely termed war magic. "If a party goes out on warlike expeditions," says Hahn, "a crow's heart is burned and pounded and loaded into a gun. The gun is fired into the air, and they believe that as this powdered heart is blown into the air, in the same manner their enemies will fly and become faint-hearted, and they will disperse like timid crows." Elsewhere he mentions that the Korana have certain roots which they use as amulets. If a commando goes out, every man will put such roots into his pockets and into the pouch where he carries his bullets, believing that the arrows or bullets of the enemy will then have no effect, whereas his own will invariably prove destructive. Also, if they have carried off much booty, or stolen cattle of the enemy, they light these roots, and say: "We thank thee, our grandfather's root, that thou hast given us cattle to eat.

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726 Let the enemy sleep, and lead him on the wrong track, that he may not
 789 follow us until we have safely escaped." Schultze mentions another
 practice, which almost seems to be a fragment of what may have been
 a developed ceremonial performed preparatory to a warlike expedition.
 To steel himself to his bloody work, he says, any man who has not
 yet killed an enemy must drink the blood of a slaughtered animal
 before going out against the foe.¹

726 Omens enter very largely into the life of the warrior. Sudden
 787 ringing of the ears or the flying of an insect into one's mouth is a
 sign of misfortune. A halo round the moon signifies that somewhere

[821] a decisive battle has been fought and the cattle of the vanquished
 driven off.² The eclipse of the moon is always considered a bad omen.

Hunting parties or an expedition of war will certainly return home.
 //Gaunabi ge dahe ha, they say, "we are overpowered by //Gauna";
 and they commence to cry aloud, torob ni ha, //o ge ni, "war is
 approaching, we are going to die."³ Dreams are usually regarded
 as of great import, and the faculty of seeing in them the future or
 events taking place at a great distance has driven many Hottentot
 leaders into taking a decisive step. Hendrik Witbooi, perhaps the
 greatest of the Nama warrior chiefs, is said to have first received the
 idea of making himself the dominant native chief in South-West Africa,
 an idea which he strenuously strove to convert into reality, through a
 vision in which he saw all the Hottentot tribes united into one nation
 under his leadership, fighting against and annihilating the OvaHerero.⁴

727 One other practice is mentioned by Hahn, which hints at something
 554 similar to the rites formerly observed in connection with big game
 hunting, but of which there is unfortunately no further information.
 "Bravery was highly admired," he says, "and girls used to meet the
 victorious heroes who returned to the kraals laden with booty,
 singing their praise. Such heroes had then to undergo a ceremony.

[304] The priest or /gaiaob cut certain marks on the chest of the brave man
 with a flint (sic) stone, and he received then on such an occasion a
 cognomen as Xama-/gamteb, Lion-killer, //Otsätamab, The One who
 cannot die, Aogu-//öb, Destroyer of heroes, etc." Names of places
 and rivers up to this day, he adds, tell us of battles once fought, such
 as !Khami and !Khamis, Battlefield; !Kho-//os-tet, "You cannot
 catch me"; !Khotoas, the one last caught; !Kxixas, peace; and
 !Huritamas, "I am not afraid."⁵

¹ Hahn, *Tsumi-//Gaun*, pp. 82; Schultze, op. cit., 339.

² Schultze, loc. cit.

³ Hahn, op. cit., 89.

⁴ Schultze, loc. cit.; Kieft, "The Diary of Hendrik Witbooi," 52.

⁵ Op. cit., 23-4.

533 monium enthusiast, however, did not care for that and con-
 517 tinued playing up to midnight. When this was prohibited
 as against the rules of the house, he answered that he did not
 know that they were not allowed to study after nine o'clock.
 One night after that he was found at the harmonium at two
 o'clock in the morning and excused himself by saying that
 the rules of the house, which he was willing to abide by, did
 not stipulate at what time of the morning a pupil could begin
 to study! In four months' time he had made so much pro-
 gress in playing the harmonium that he accompanied the
 hymns in the community services.

532 8. Many of the young people also show aptitude in the art
 517 of painting. A grandson of the notorious Hendrik Withoof
 painted two ostriches with such a typically African back-
 ground in coloured chalk on the board for his final examination
 after three years' preparation for the profession of teacher,
 that even the Government Inspector was amazed. Thus, the
 results of the mental development of the Nama, clearly per-
 ceptible to-day, show that the trouble and pains bestowed on
 them bear fruit; and nothing is more erroneous than to
 imagine the Hottentots are mentally one of the most primitive
 races. In the political economy of South-West Africa their
 weakly physique will play a very small part however; but for
 work which does not exact much bodily strength but requires
 intelligence the Nama will in the future be preferred to other
 natives.

IX. USAGE AND LAWS.

642 The Chief with councillors and magistrate is the represen-
 643 tative of the law. The last named is his right hand in all
 645 public and legal matters. Under normal circumstances the
 son inherits the chieftainship from his father. In times of
 peace the powers of the Chief are very limited. Without
 having consulted a mass meeting and without the decision of
 the councillors the instructions of a chief are of very little
 consequence. The form of government of a chieftainship is
 altogether democratic. Within this democratic frame, how-
 ever, the Chief rules like a patriarch. This state of affairs is
 radically changed during war. If a war breaks out the Chief
 becomes dictator.

645 The councillors are elected at a mass meeting, and at the
 643 same time function as judges. Decisions by them are re-
 garded as laws by the tribe and their sentences, passed under
 the presidency of the eldest among them, are executed. There
 is no appeal to a higher court. Only in cases where there is
 no consensus of opinion among the judges with regard to the
 [643] passing of a sentence is the matter referred to the Chief whose
 casting vote then settles the question finally.

[641] 2. As the Nama possess a very fine sense of justice and
 642 injustice, legal disputes are not at all uncommon. But since

their herds or lived, are regarded as territory of the tribe. 423
 At present these disputes do not occur any more since tribal possession of land has ceased to exist and reserves have been granted to individual tribes as usufruct and not as property. Consequently it is of no further interest to consider these old rights. They had rights of pasturage, honey, hunting, springs and water, etc., but these have ceased to exist. The Administration fixes legal boundaries for their reserves.

8. The facts with reference to hereditary rights are, how- 428
 ever, quite different, for up to now the legislation of the Administration has not tampered with the rights of inheritance among the Nama—a fact which is very pleasing. As has been said, the chieftainship is inherited from the father by the eldest son. In case the chief has no sons, the sons of the eldest brother of the chief are the nearest relations entitled to the inheritance. The children inherit everything from their parents, the heritage being divided equally amongst the sons and daughters and the eldest son is regarded as the administrator of the estate under the supervision of the eldest living brother of the father. [643]

If the children are still under age and the grandparents 429
 are still alive, then they act on behalf of the guardian and take the orphans and their heritage to themselves. When children's parents die, their parents take possession of their estate. 428
 When they also are dead, the chief divides the estate among the relatives, the following order being observed: the eldest sister of the husband, the brothers of the father of the late man, the sisters of the father, the sisters of the mother, the children of the brothers of the deceased, the children of the remaining sisters of the deceased, the children of his mother's sisters.

Illegitimate children of the man are entitled to an inheritance 428
 just as the other children. Illegitimate children of the 848
 mother have no claim to the inheritance as they belong to their father's family, who was obliged to support them in their first years and had taken care of them after that.

They could only depart from this law of inheritance on the oral testimony of the testator arranging it. They usually abided unconsciously by such stipulations in reverence for the deceased; and fear that the deceased might take revenge for their not complying with the stipulations of his will played no part in it.

X. CIVILISATION AND MODERN TIMES.

The nomadic Nama tribes had already been affected by 177
 European civilisation from three different sides a hundred years ago. There were the Orlam tribes who immigrated gradually towards the beginning of last century, then the hunters and traders who travelled through the country and lastly the missionaries. It might seem strange that the